

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

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MUCC Testimony on House Bill 4286

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Committee Members.

My name is Dave Nyberg and today I'm here today on the behalf of the sportsmen and women of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs to express our support for House Bill 4286.

As you know, Michigan is a state that prides itself on our diverse and plentiful recreational opportunities – in fact we depend on them, particularly during this challenging economic climate we are facing. Beneath manufacturing and agriculture, tourism is Michigan's third largest industry. Despite the lack of love given to sportsmen in our lovely "Pure Michigan" commercials, hunting and fishing counts for a significant portion of tourism in Michigan. In fact, hunters and anglers spend \$3.4 billion annually in-state on combined expenses for their recreational pursuits (\$9.4 million per day).

However, when you take away access to forests, lakes, streams, uplands and wetlands from sportsmen, these economic opportunities are flushed away with the quality of life their sport provides as well as the ever-diminishing outdoor heritage we seek to pass down to future generations.

House Bill 4286 will help mitigate the trend of decreasing recreational access to private land by creating a seamless system of utilizing state lands currently closed to hunting and fishing.

This bill provides appropriate discretion for Department to manage sensitive habitats while also ensuring Michigan residents will not experience a "net loss" in recreational access.

Conservation and wise management of the resources that provide for our recreational pursuits has always been a priority of MUCC. With that in mind, now more than ever MUCC stresses that Michigan must work to improve access to our great out-of-doors – for the sake of economic and social prosperity as well as our outdoor heritage.